

holding a raw potato chip. These were spread over an adjacent roof for drying in the sun.

The chip was held in the bill and repeatedly struck on the tree branches resulting in its breaking into several pieces which fell on the ground. The last remaining portion was eaten.

In the HANDBOOK (Ali and Ripley, 1987 -

Vol. 6, pp 408) the food of the species has been mentioned as insects, berries, wild figs, and nectar of a variety of flowers.

February 5, 1996

A.M.K. BHAROS
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23. POSSIBLE FEEDING ON AN UNHATCHED EGG BY YOUNG ONE OF REDVENTED BULBUL (*PYCNONOTUS CAFER*)

A pair of redvented bulbuls (*Pycnonotus cafer*) made a nest above a tube light in my room in Sangli, Maharashtra. The nest was completed in four days, and the first egg laid on 10th May, 1990. The second and third eggs were laid on subsequent days. After the third egg was laid, both the birds incubated the eggs for 24 hrs. Close observation was possible from 16th May, onwards. The bird that sat on the nest at night was presumed to be a female. Every evening another bird that did not sit on the nest at night used to spend an hour or more with the female, sitting on the nearby grill of the window or a hook on the roof of the hall. At dusk (about 1900 hrs) he generally moved out of the hall and roosted on a nearby bush (*Nyctanthes arbortristis*).

Looking at the nest, normal movement of people in the room or other noises did not provoke any response from the incubating bird. It is interesting to note that from the very first day of incubation the female did not show any sign of fear except that she raised her head when we were too noisy, which happened frequently.

The duration of incubation was reduced from 30th May, onwards. The male stopped sitting on the nest, formerly he used to fill the gap in incubation, when the female left the nest for food. The incubation was completely stopped from 1st to 8th June. The male did not visit the nest at all from 1st to 9th June, but the female visited it atleast thrice a day and sat on the eggs for 45-50 min before flying off.

On 9th June, at 2000 hrs the female came and sat on the nest upto 2300 hrs. In the morning at 0700 hrs, she was still there. After some time she went out of the room, close observation revealed another egg in the nest. After 19 days of incubation and a gap of 28 days, the fourth egg was laid by the same female. Incubation was again regular till 20th June.

On 21st June, one chick was seen; on 22nd June, at 0900 hrs one more egg showed signs of hatching. In the evening I found it had also hatched and there were two chicks. The former chick was much bigger than the latter. The remaining two eggs did not hatch.

On 23rd June, one egg disappeared without any trace. The next day at 1730 hrs when the parents were out I examined the nest. The older chick occupied more space and the smaller one was sandwiched between it and the edge of the nest. The second thing which I observed was quiet interesting. There was a big bulge on the throat of the older chick. The skin at the throat had no feathers and at the bulge the skin was so stretched that it was almost transparent. I felt the bulge with my fingers; it was round and hard, similar to an egg. Due to the transparency of the skin I could observe the brown blotches on it. I suspect it was the remaining egg in the nest. After 15 min there was no bulge at the throat, as the egg went down into the stomach.

On 29th June, in the morning I saw the smaller chick dead on the floor with two holes in it. One in the ribs on the right side of the

sternum keel, the second one on the abdomen, with some part of its intestines bulging out. There is no evidence to show what had happened. Finally, on 5th July the larger chick fledged.

July 10, 1996

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24. POSSIBLE COMMUNAL NESTING IN THE WYNAAD LAUGHING THRUSH *GARRULAX DELESSERTI DELESSERTI* (JERDON)

The Wynaad laughing thrush, *Garrulax delesserti*, occurs in southern Western Ghats, in humid rain forest with dense understory (Ali 1968, BIRDS OF KERALA). This bird lives in flocks.

On 18th April, 1994, about 4 km from Thekkady on the Mangaladevi road, in Periyar Tiger Reserve, in a semi-evergreen forest, I came across a flock of 16 birds in the morning. They were foraging on the ground "rummaging amongst the mulch", turning over dead leaves, and uttering chattering calls.

At 0950 hrs I saw one bird followed by another flying to an isolated 4 m tall *Actinodaphne hirsuta* tree with a rootlet in its beak. Two more birds were seen following immediately, one with a rootlet and another without. I saw a nest under construction, about

3 m high on the central fork of one branch of the tree. The birds were adding nesting material to it, and building a cup shape. The nesting activity continued until 1150 hours. Three birds were bringing the nesting material and the fourth, always accompanied them without any material. The nest building birds seemed to be unconcerned about my presence. Other members of the group were foraging about 5 m away. The birds disappeared through a dense thicket at 1155 hrs and could not be traced. I could come back to the place only after 2 days and the nest was found damaged.

October 27, 1995

V.J. ZACHARIAS,
Periyar Tiger Reserve,
Thekkady, Kerala.

25. FEEDING BY ROSEFINCH *CARPODACUS ERYTHRINUS* (PALLAS) ON APHID SECRETION

The usual food of rosefinch (*Carpodacus erythrinus*) includes mostly seeds (of weeds, millet, linseed, vetch, *Polygonum*, bamboo, etc.), flower buds, fruits and berries such as mulberry, raspberries, wild cherries, banyan and pipal figs, *Lantana*, *Maesa*, *Trema*; also nectar of *Erythrina*, *Salmalia*, *Butea*, *Woodfordia* and other blossoms. There is a single record of insects (Ali and Ripley, HANDBOOK OF THE BIRDS OF INDIA AND PAKISTAN, Vol. 10, pp 165, 1974). Witherby, Jourdain, Ticehurst and Tucker, in HANDBOOK OF BRITISH BIRDS Vol. 1, pp 89, 1938 mention young birds taking insects and larvae. In an openwooded grove near Dombivli (Dist. Thane, Maharashtra), a migratory flock was observed feeding on aphid

secretion which was present on immature fruits of *Holoptelea integrifolia*.

The aphid-laden young green samaroid fruit of *H. integrifolia* show sweet, sticky droplets of the honey dew secreted by aphids on the seed wings. It is commonly observed that ants attend aphid infested plant parts for this secretion and in turn defend the aphids in a symbiotic relationship. However, it was interesting to see the birds visiting these fruits for the honeydew not only once but regularly for about half a month (late January, 1994). Birds were observed daily, either between 0630 to 1000 hrs or between 1700 to 1830 hrs. Though there are many trees of *Holoptelea* in the area, most birds of the flock